

VZCZCXRO9218
PP RUEHLMC
DE RUEHLP #0240 0322105
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 012105Z FEB 06
FM AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7913
INFO RUEHAC/AMEMBASSY ASUNCION 5571
RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA 2836
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 6705
RUEHBU/AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES 3918
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 1280
RUEHPE/AMEMBASSY LIMA 1176
RUEHMN/AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO 3536
RUEHQT/AMEMBASSY QUITO 3921
RUEHSG/AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO 8432
RHMFISS/HQ USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL
RUMIAAA/USCINCSO MIAMI FL
RUEHLMC/MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORP
RHEBAAA/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHINGTON DC
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHINGTON DC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHINGTON DC

C O N F I D E N T I A L LA PAZ 000240

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/14/2016

TAGS: [ECON](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [BL](#)

SUBJECT: RODRIGUEZ CONCERNED ABOUT THREATS TO JUDICIARY

Classified By: Amb. David N. Greenlee for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: In a meeting with AID Deputy Assistant Administrator Mike Magan, the Ambassador and Embassy officials on January 31, former President (and current Supreme Court President) Rodriguez shared his concerns that President Morales will threaten Bolivia's relatively young democratic institutions. He also said that the MAS has moved into Sucre, the judicial capital, in order to consolidate power there, and that the atmosphere is one of "high persecution." Due to "indirect threats" from the MAS and the slashing of judicial salaries, Rodriguez and up to half of his colleagues plan to resign from the Supreme Court in the next few months. End summary.

¶2. (C) In a meeting with AID Deputy Assistant Administrator Mike Magan, the Ambassador and Embassy officials on January 31, former President (and current Supreme Court President) Rodriguez shared his concerns that President Morales will threaten Bolivia's relatively young democratic institutions. He emphasized that the international community has supported the growth of those institutions since 1982, when Bolivia ended its last military dictatorship and returned to a civilian democratic government. Rodriguez stated that Morales supports democracy to the extent that it propelled him to power, but that he may not maintain it. Rodriguez said that "we have to make sure the institutions don't disappear."

¶3. (C) Rodriguez also said that the MAS has moved into Sucre, Bolivia's judicial capital, in order to consolidate power there, and that the atmosphere is one of "high persecution." He said that the MAS has co-opted many district attorneys, and that it is building an "aggressive presence" in Sucre. He said that the MAS already influences several of his colleagues on the Supreme Court, and implied that the MAS orchestrated opposition to his return to the court on January 23.

¶4. (C) Due to "indirect threats" from the MAS and the slashing of judicial salaries, Rodriguez and up to half of his colleagues plan to resign from the Supreme Court in the next few months. Rodriguez lamented that Morales did not approach him directly regarding the salary cuts proposed across all sectors of government. He explained that judges

and lawyers pay almost 25 percent of their salary in taxes, and that cutting salaries by half will make it difficult for them to meet their basic financial needs. Rodriguez opined that the salary cuts are a MAS tactic to "clean house" in order to pack the Supreme Court and then steamroll through the Constituent Assembly without judicial opposition (or virtually any checks on MAS power, assuming it will have control of the executive, legislative and judicial branches of government). He worried that lower government salaries will lead to increased corruption and that the incoming justices will not be properly trained.

15. (C) Comment: Rodriguez's perspectives sharpen the concern that the independence of an already weak judicial sector could be further eroded by the MAS juggernaut. Rodriguez's departure, along with certain others, would remove an important counter to the developing trend. End comment.
GREENLEE